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PREVENTION * LAW ENFORCEMENT * RESEARCH

Maine Fire Marshal News

Maine State Fire Marshal's Office • Fire Research
Maine Department of Public Safety
Fire Marshal's Web Page

February 2010

Winter 2010 Vol. 2, Issue No. 5

WELCOME!

Welcome to another issue of the Maine Fire Marshal News. Please take some time to read the newsletter and send us your own article for a future publication or comments in general. As always, we do appreciate the feedback on the newsletter many of you have sent over the past few years and look forward to hearing from you more in the future.



A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

Like all local, county, and state public organizations the State Fire Marshal's Office is having to operate with fewer dollars. Some very painful decisions have been made with

others to come.

As many of you know, the Fire Marshal's Office is funded through a tax on fire insurance premiums collected by the insurance companies in addition to inspections and plans review fees.

A small amount is also received through grants that are available to fire service related organizations.

Needless to say, when the economy is down, fees for plans reviews, and even inspections to some degree, decline. These revenues along with the fire insurance tax premium dollars that fund this office are all dedicated revenues - not general funds. These funds, under statute, "*must be used to defray the expenses incurred by the Commissioner in administering all fire preventive and investigative laws and rules and in educating the public in fire safety and is appropriated for those purposes and to carry out the administration and duties of the Office of the State Fire Marshal.*"

For our office fire prevention and protection involves a continuum of fire investigations, fire inspections, plans review, fire prevention education and awareness programming. Ironically this Office had maintained a healthy fund balance in anticipation of down times. Unfortunately, the money in this fund has been used to help, indirectly, balance the states budget and the fund is now completely depleted. Though we believe that every agency must become more efficient, the removal of these funds to the point where we are now in a deficit has had unfortunate outcomes.

We do not have the funds needed to pay investigators for the time it takes to collect evidence, inspect records, conduct interviews and testify as expert witnesses at trial. Because

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fire investigations by nature are complex and frequently involve overtime work (you never know when a fire will occur), the cost of which we can not pay, a backlog of cases is building. Currently there are 150 arson cases still open!

Often investigations require the assistance of our plans review and inspections staff to determine if there were code issues involved in the fire. Again, because of the lack of available funds, furlough days and overtime limits, this essential service can not be provided and hence, investigations get delayed. And speaking of inspections, because of the tight budget and furloughs, we currently have approximately 500 inspections waiting to be done. For those operating day cares, nursing homes, and other licensed facilities, this is a major problem.

In the area of public education and awareness, our office had planned to continue bringing on the University of Maine students who have visited day cares throughout Maine over the past two summers. We will not be able to do that this summer. We had also planned on putting together public safety announcements focused on both carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Again, we will have put these and other plans on hold for now.

For our office, reductions in any of these areas, be it education, enforcement or engineering, breaks the continuum of fire prevention and protection. They are all tied together, and when one is compromised the overall public value of the organization is diminished.

We hope to see some relief in the near future. Until then, thanks to all of you who have expressed your support for this office and its staff.

Sincerely,



John C. Dean
Fire Marshal

FIRE SPRINKLER INCENTIVE ACT INRODUCED IN SENATE

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

Senators Tom Carper of Delaware and Susan Collins of Maine have introduced the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act (S. 2947) in the Senate on January 22nd. The bill will amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for the purposes of depreciation.

On the House side Representative Langevin of Rhode Island introduced similar legislation (H.R. 1194) on February 25th. The House bill has 117 cosponsors signed on.

The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act was first introduced in 2003 following the Station House Nightclub fire that took the lives of 100 people. It is hoped the bill, if it becomes law, will provide an incentive for owners of existing commercial structures to retrofit fire sprinkler systems into those structures.

Among the many findings listed in the House bill were the list of original recommendations made in *America's Burning* published back in 1974 which included the installation of sprinkler systems in existing structures. Those recommendations that have yet to be met.

Presently, a fire sprinkler retrofit in a commercial building is depreciated over 39 years and a residential building over 27 and one-half years. This archaic depreciation schedule provides no economic incentive for the retrofitting of fire sprinklers in the high inventory of critical occupancies across America. Passage of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act would eliminate this economic roadblock by providing for a more rapid recovery of cost and serve greatly to reduce the tremendous annual economic and human losses that fire in the US inflicts on the national economy and the quality of life. Passage of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act would be consistent with past practice at the

Federal level where Congress historically has provided such incentives.

FIRE & CO PROTECTION **SYSTEM SAVES**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

We continue to hear good news about people being saved due to the installation of smoke and CO alarms. This is good news considering Maine just passed a CO law which is being clarified further this legislative session. The State Fire Marshal's Office will also be moving forward with rule making in an expanded number of residential occupancy types including motels, hotels, bed and breakfasts, as well as dormitories and sororities.

Recently firefighters in Oakland, Maine responded to what was first thought to be a fire. Upon arrival it was determined that there was no fire. However, before allowing residents to return to their homes in the 13 unit apartment building a CO reading was taken and the levels of CO in one area of the building were as high as 100 ppm. The owner of the building had recently complied with Maine law and installed CO detectors. No one was hurt and after the building was vented the residents returned to their homes.

This event in Oakland is instructive for two reasons. First, authorities were able to determine the cause as a heating malfunction due primarily to improper maintenance. Second, the firefighters almost left the scene believing it was a false fire alarm. As more and

more building owners comply with the law Maine's fire service will need to be aware of the threat CO poses not only for residents but for themselves and to make sure the CO threat is no longer present before leaving the scene.

In Manchester, Maine a mother of three was alerted to a fire in her home when smoke alarms went off due to a candle mishap. That smoke alarm was provided by the Manchester Fire Department during an open house this past fall at the fire station. The parents of these children are to be commended as well for actually installing the alarms.

Another CO scare and save took place in Portsmouth, NH last week at the Hilton Garden Inn. A faulty vent in the hotel's basement boiler sickened 11 people most of whom were around the facilities swimming pool. All 11 individuals were hospitalized though all but one was released. The one individual remained in the hospital but as last reported that person was improving. CO levels in the structure were as high as 600 ppm. Had this event occurred in the early AM hours this may have been a disaster. The boiler vent has been repaired but there was no mention of installing CO alarms.

The Portsmouth, NH event is of particular concern to the Maine Fire Marshal's Office who has begun the process of examining how other states developed and implemented regulations for CO detection systems in motels, hotels, and other residential settings. There was little doubt among those who worked with the Fire Marshal's Office on the CO legislation and the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety that the same CO threats we see in single or multifamily dwellings are also present in many of these other residential occupancies.

It should be noted that though there are similarities between the more traditional "primary" residential dwelling and the "transient" residential dwelling there are also differences in the overall physical and behavioral environments we see in the two types of residential occupancies. Those differences also need to be weighed carefully.



www.homefiresprinkler.org



LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

By Mary Hauprich, for the LifeFlight Foundation

There are a handful of fire/EMS departments within the state that have enrolled in the AmeriCorps/Emergency Response Corps program. This program provides departments with firefighters and/or EMTs/paramedics generally for an 11-month period, to help meet certain goals that departments otherwise struggle to achieve due to staffing or financial constraints. It is then hoped that these volunteer positions may lead to full-time employment down the road. (To learn more, go to www.americorps.gov.)

I am one such volunteer, with a bit of a twist. Already a member of the Islesboro Fire Department and the Islesboro Water Rescue Team, I haven't been assigned to a fire or EMS department; rather, I've joined AmeriCorps/ERC to serve a term with the LifeFlight Foundation (www.lifeflightmaine.org) in Camden.

As a non-profit organization, LifeFlight relies on donations from individuals, corporations and government to purchase specialty medical equipment and pay for the aircraft. Funds are patient-focused, and administrative costs kept to a bare minimum. So when they identified the need to work more closely with our friends and partners "on the ground" in fire and EMS, they turned to the AmeriCorps program.

One of my roles here is to visit with fire and EMS departments in the state and discuss ways to strengthen the bonds between fire, EMS and LifeFlight. The assignment is two-fold. First, to provide departments with information on a variety of training opportunities available – clinical EMS training, ground safety training for first responders, hands-on, real-time, scenario based training in the Human Patient Simulator – all good stuff. Secondly, I'll invite chiefs and members of their service to join other fire and EMS personnel by becoming a LifeFlight Ambassador.

LifeFlight Ambassadors understand the big picture; as first responders in our rural state, they know first-hand how crucial it is to have an emergency air medicine service available for the patients in their community.

They know LifeFlight is a non-profit organization that must continue to operate even when, as is currently the case, a staggering 40+% of patients cannot afford to pay for services. Our LifeFlight Ambassadors pledge to help by hosting a benefit event in their area, as well as being LifeFlight's liaison to their community.

These dedicated people give a gift of time and energy to help LifeFlight in a variety of ways, including:

- Hosting and helping out at fundraising functions (bean suppers, fishing derbies, snowmobile races, sailing regattas, dances, raffles)
- Representing LifeFlight at special events
- Managing merchandise and information booths

Thanks to their efforts, we are able to keep our fundraising costs low and direct as much money as possible toward our patient care program.

You too can make a difference by becoming a LifeFlight Ambassador. We provide a complete orientation, a "LifeFlight Ambassador" tee-shirt, and opportunities for personal growth. Ambassadors benefit in many ways, not the least of which is creating new and lasting friendships. We will celebrate the Ambassadors' achievements at an annual dinner in the fall.

LifeFlight understands that it takes many talented people to care for a critically ill or injured person. From the first person who called 911, to the dispatcher, to the first responders arriving on-scene, to the firefighters setting up a landing zone, to the flight crew, to the receiving hospitals, to the post-hospital care – we all work in tandem to make sure we provide the best emergency care possible to the good people of Maine.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Hauprich



<http://www.smokefreeforme.org/>

MEFIRS – Maine Fire Incident Reporting System

| | Current Statistics 2009* | Final Statistics for 2008 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Calls: | 59,562 | 71,667 |
| Fire Calls: | 2,937 | 3,531** |
| EMS Calls: | 39,719 | 43,086 |
| All others: | 16,906 | 23,815 |
| Fire Departments Reporting | 160 | 181 |
| Total Fire Dollar Loss | \$29,428,161 | \$31,163,227 |
| Civilian Fire Related Injuries | 30 | 42 |
| Fire Service Fire Related Injuries | 26 | 22 |
| Civilian Fire Related Deaths | 14*** | 14 |
| Fire Service Fire Related Deaths | 1 | 0 |

* The Fire Marshal's Office will have all data for 2009 in by June-July of 2010.

** Represents single incidents only.

*** Based on SFMO Investigations

For strategic purposes, some of Maine's Fire Departments have been monitoring the amount of mutual aid they give and receive. For some departments tallying the numbers becomes difficult when they discover that they did not provide the FDID number for the Department that provided or received mutual aid in section D of the Basic module. Though this FDID number is not a required field, it is worth filling in anyway in case you wish to tally the aid you've given or received.

FDID numbers are available in the data entry tool or you can obtain them from the Maine Fire Marshal's web page at <http://maine.gov/dps/fmo/mefirs/counties.html>

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Be sure to submit your 2009 data so that it goes into the record for all departments to utilize.

In the next two months you should see the SFMO web post the 2006, 2007 and 2008 annual reports. As always, the web based tools available from NFIRS can provide you with even more details than the our annual reports by allowing to dig down deeper into data about your specific fire department.

As always we encourage you to get more and more departments to provide data so that we can gain a more accurate picture of Maine's fire burden.

"Fight Fire with Facts"

MAINE FIREWATCH

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

The following fires occurred in Maine since this newsletter was last published in November of 2009.

The very day we sent out the last issue of this newsletter the offices of the *Lincoln News*, a popular weekly, went up in flames. Though no one was hurt, fire departments from four towns responded. The fire broke out sometime around 6:30 in the early evening. The building was considered a



Photo by Nick Sambides, BDN

total loss.

The apartment below, located in Waterville was gutted by fire this past December. The fire left the apartment uninhabitable with seven tenants homeless. The fire resulted in one resident being sent to the hospital for smoke inhalation. Unfortunately the owner of the building was in the process of upgrading all the dwellings



Photo by David Leaming of the KJ

in the apartment. In the foreground are SFMO investigators Mark Roberts (left) and Ken MacMaster (right). The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental. There were no reports of smoke alarms being present in the structure.

This next fire represents a “good save” on the part of firefighters from six fire departments.

The fire took place in a single-family dwelling in Manchester, Maine. The owner managed to escape but firefighters did manage to save two



Photo by Andy Malloy, KJ

cats and a dog from the blaze. In the picture to the right you see a Fayette firefighter with a cat in his arms. The owner of the structure was attempting to locate his pets when a neighbor intervened to get him out. The house itself had only minor damage.

A late January fire caused an estimated \$8 – \$9 million dollars in damage to the Franklin Health Community Arts Center which is connected to Franklin Memorial Hospital. The hospital was not evacuated and operations have been maintained. There were no injuries reported. The Center opened this past June after two years of construction. Firefighters were able to suppress the fire which started in the attic of the Medical Arts Center. Most of the costs associated with the fire were based on cleaning up the building. Services provided at the center were relocated to other hospital facilities in order to continue operations. Approximately 92 firefighters responded to the fire from seven localities. The Fire Marshal’s Office is investigating the fire but did not believe the cause to be intentional. The good news is that the sprinkler system did its job until the firefighters could get there to finish suppressing the fire.

Another expensive fire took place in Manchester destroying a garage facility. That fire (pictured on the following page) resulted in two injuries. One individual suffered severe burns and had to be taken by helicopter to Brigham and Women’s Medical Center in Boston, MASS. Another individual was treated for smoke inhalation and released. The fire



that started about 8 AM completely destroyed the structure that housed B&S Paving and Sylvester Excavation. Investigators from the Fire Marshal's Office determined that the fire started in a garage bay when a worker was changing out a gasoline tank on a vehicle triggering a flash fire.

MAINE FIRE MARSHAL'S INVESTIGATORS RECOGNIZED BY U.S. ATTORNEY SILSBY

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

Investigators Chris Stanford and Dan Young were recognized by United States Attorney's Office for their investigative work in the U.S. v. Everett Stickney case.

Everette S. Stickney was apprehended by Portsmouth Police in March of 2009 after attempting to burglarize a shed at Strawberry Bank in Portsmouth, N.H. According to court documents Stickney had burglarized and destroyed (by a fire he set) a commercial building located at 500 US Route One in Yarmouth, Maine that contained 26 businesses. The next evening, two offices located at 433 US Route 1 in York, known as the Cottage Place Business Complex, were burglarized and one office was damaged by a fire that Stickney set.

Over the course of those two days, Stickney committed similar crimes at commercial buildings located at 60 Forest Falls Drive in Yarmouth; 57 Portland Road - US

Route 1 in Kennebunk, known as the Wonderbrook Business Center; 1950 US Route 1 in York, known as Storage Solutions; and 647 US Route 1, York, Maine, known as the Meadow Brook Offices.

A vinyl bank deposit bag stolen by the Stickney from an office at 500 Route One in Yarmouth, was found about ½ mile away at the scene of the 60 Forest Falls Drive burglary, in close proximity to a Marlboro cigarette butt that had the defendant's DNA on it. Stickney was also a possible source of DNA found on the vinyl bank deposit bag and a pry bar found at the scene of the 60 Forest Falls Drive burglary.

Investigators also linked Stickney's black Volkswagen Golf automobile to surveillance photographs obtained from cameras located in close proximity to several of the burglaries; learned that the defendant stayed at a hotel in Freeport during the crime spree; and tracked defendant's movements to the vicinity of the burglaries and arsons using information associated with his cellular telephone.

U.S. Attorney Paula Silsby praised the coordinated investigative work that brought together the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Maine Fire Marshal's Office, along with local police departments in Yarmouth, Kennebunk, York, Scarborough, Kittery and Exeter, New Hampshire. Local police officers from Portsmouth, New Hampshire were also recognized for their contribution to the case.

Stickney was sentenced to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to arson the cost of which was estimated between \$2 to \$4 million dollars. The fires displaced 26 businesses.



This Month in Fire History

Great Baltimore Fire loss worth \$1,019 million (2003 dollars), 1904

First fire extinguisher patent issued to Alanson Crane, 1863

Katie Jane Nursing Home fire kills 72, Warrenton (MO), 1957

Manhattan State Hospital fire kills 25, Ward's Island (NY), 1923

One Meridian Plaza fire, loss worth \$439 million (2003 dollars), Philadelphia (PA), 1991

NY Bronze Powders Co. warehouse, loss worth \$210 million (2003 dollars), Elizabeth (NJ), 1985

Perhaps the most well known of catastrophic fires in recent American history was the Station Nightclub fire that occurred in West Warwick, RI on February 20, 2003. The fire was caused when pyrotechnic devices, set off by the tour manager of the evening's headlining band, Great White, ignited flammable sound insulation foam in the walls and ceilings around the stage, creating a flash fire that engulfed the club in 5½ minutes. The fire killed 100 people and injured another 200.

In Waterville, Maine on February 18, 1945 two women were killed when the Jefferson Hotel burned. Others were hurt as they escaped the rapidly spreading fire by leaping from the second floor of the hotel. The fire also burned an adjacent single-family dwelling. The total loss of the hotel was estimated to be \$50,000. (photo below)



Apparently February is a bad month for the city of Waterville which also lost its Haines Theatre in 1967 (photo above right). Another fire burned a 135 year-old classroom building at Coburn Classical Institute in Waterville in 1955. No one was injured though damage estimates ranged between \$200 to \$300,000.



Haines Theatre, Waterville 1967



Would you let your child play with fire?

Every year thousands of Americans, mostly children, are hurt by consumer fireworks such as sparklers and firecrackers. Many are burned, scarred or disfigured by fireworks that are legal, but still very dangerous and cause fires. This year, an alliance of health and safety advocates asks you to keep fireworks from hurting your family. The risk is too great.

Leave fireworks to the professionals.

National Fire Protection Association along with: American Academy of Family Physicians • American Academy of Ophthalmology • American Academy of Pediatrics • American Association for Hand Surgery • American Association of Public Health Physicians • American Burn Association • American College of Emergency Physicians • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • Emergency Nurses Association • Fire Department Safety Officers Association • International Association of Arson Investigators • International Association of Fire Chiefs • International Association of Fire Fighters • International Fire Marshals Association • Metropolitan Fire Chiefs • National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners • National Association of School Nurses • National Association of State Fire Marshals • National Volunteer Fire Council • Prevent Blindness America

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



State of Maine
Maine Fire Protection Services
Commission

7th ANNUAL
BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE for
FIRST RESPONDERS
Friday & Saturday – March 26 &
27, 2010
POINT LOOKOUT RESORT &
CONFERENCE CENTER
NORTHPORT, ME
Two-Day Conference not to be
missed!
**Networking Opportunities &
Exhibitors**

Over 250 Fire Service Professionals, First Responders, Police, Health Officers, EMS & Municipal Officials in attendance
MARCH 26, 2010 KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
BATTALION CHIEF JOHN SALKA - New York Fire Department

"5 ALARM LEADERSHIP"

This leadership class will help you lead your department to success. Leadership skills and lessons from George Patten and others will be shared with you. Find out how to get your firefighters and officers in your department to "Take Your Department up a Notch." A must class for all Public Safety personnel.
MARCH 27, 2010 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: HOWARD CROSS - from Shaftsbury, Vermont
"LEADERSHIP: The Seductive Lie"



JPMA is offering an online class for police, fire and EMS officials interested in:

Methamphetamine Awareness: The purpose of this class is to make Maine police officers aware of the dangers methamphetamine, a highly addictive drug with potent central nervous system stimulant properties.

Responding to Methamphetamine Labs: This class will provide officers with some basic terminology of meth labs, as well as equipment used in them and protocols to follow if you identify the location of a possible lab.

These are online classes. What you need to do is have your chief of chief administrative officer go to the following url. Once there, proceed to the Maine Online Training then click Fire and you can see these classes and others as well as what you need to do to take a class.

<http://www.jpmaweb.com>

For more information above these and other online training opportunities contact:

Maine Fire Service Online Training Center
P.O.Box 5260 | Augusta, Maine 04332
Phone (207) 621-8600 | Fax (207) 621-8609
Contact: [Paul Plaisted](#)



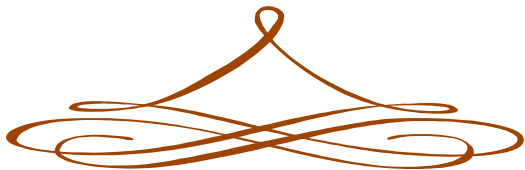
The Maine State Fire Marshal's Office will host a training by the National Fire Sprinkler Association focused on inspection and testing for the sprinkler industry. Details regarding fees and schedule will be announced.

It's an opportunity to learn skills required to be a productive inspector and enforcer of NFPA 25.

The training will be held on May 25 – 27 here in Augusta at the:

Office of the State Fire Marshal,
Florian Hall
45 Commerce Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333

If you have an announcement or upcoming event you'd like to post in this newsletter please feel free to forward it to us using the contact information below. The next issue will be in May 2010.



The ***Maine Fire Marshal News*** is an electronic publication of the Maine State Fire Marshal's Office.

Editors: Richard E. Taylor & Lori L. Gunn

To submit articles for publication contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (207) 626-3870 and ask to speak with the editors. You may also e-mail an article or comment to Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov

All articles are subject to an editorial staff review prior to inclusion. For a copy of submission requirements contact the editorial staff.

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